

Why Missions Discipleship Is Important for the Church

“WMU helped me learn to look outside myself and recognize the needs of others and try to help them. My involvement in missions groups at an early age helped me understand other cultures very different from my own and helped me develop a worldview. Teaching missions groups showed me the power of God to change a young life into someone He could work through to accomplish His will.”

— Shirley Cox



Missions discipleship is grounded in the command of Jesus to His disciples, “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:19–20 CSB).

Missions discipleship in the church provides opportunities for everyone—preschoolers through adults—to be involved in missions. Churches who provide missions discipleship encourage people to grow in their faith as they learn about missions, pray for missions, support missions, and do missions.



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Why Missions Discipleship Is Important for the Church



How to Start Missions Discipleship in the Church

- 1. Seek out leaders.** The suggested way of organizing WMU in a church is to have a WMU director and missions groups for any or all age levels. Or the WMU director, the pastor, or another church leader may lead missions awareness and involvement activities.
- 2. Order resources.** Using WMU resources will help you plan missions involvement and share information that is timely, inspiring, and challenging. Missions Leader: WMU Planning Guide is a great overall resource to help you get started.
- 3. Plan.** Form a WMU leadership team to plan and coordinate the work of WMU. Quarterly meetings are suggested, but each team determines the frequency of planning meetings.
- 4. Invite.** Involve your church in missions and equip them to share Christ. Invite people to participate in churchwide opportunities and in age-level groups.
- 5. Work with other leaders to provide multiple opportunities.** Collaborate to offer different ways to involve everyone in the church in missions. Continue to start new churchwide activities as well as age-level groups as needed. Consider how you can utilize WMU Compassion Ministries—Project HELP: Mental Health, Christian Women’s Job Corps/Christian Men’s Job Corps, WorldCrafts, and Pure Water, Pure Love—as a springboard for missions involvement.
- 6. Communicate.** Keep your church informed about missions activities, groups, and projects.

For more information about starting churchwide WMU or expanding your church’s missions involvement, visit wmu.com/churchwide.

Visit wmu.com/howtoleadchurchwide for more about planning and leading churchwide missions experiences.

Join our online community:

facebook.com/NationalWMU
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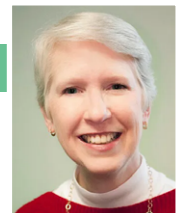
We’re here to help!

For questions about starting or leading churchwide WMU:

National WMU: Contact Joye Smith, ministry consultant, at jsmith@wmu.org or (205) 991-4980.

State WMU: Find links to state WMU websites at wmu.com/statecontacts.

Contact your local Baptist association, your state WMU office, or national WMU for training opportunities.



Ways to Engage Your Church



Engage your church in missions awareness and involvement. These resources will help you provide churchwide opportunities for the year and expand as needed with age-level missions groups, special projects, and other opportunities. WMU print and digital resources are available from wmustore.com or by calling 1-800-968-7301.

Missions Leader: WMU Planning Guide 2023–24

Plan for an entire year! This guide introduces the theme for the year and provides suggestions for churchwide missions events, weeks of prayer and missions offering promotion, leadership tips, and much more.

Order one per leader.
Print: \$21.99
Digital: \$19.99
Prices subject to change.

WMU: An Overview

[WMU: An Overview](#) is a self-guided minicourse that provides general information about Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) and equips leaders with the tools needed to teach training conferences about the overall ministry of WMU. Once you begin this online course, it is available to you for 30 days, and access to an online folder of digital resources is available indefinitely once you complete the course. This course and other leadership development courses from WMU are available at ChristianLeaderLearning.com.



WMU | AN OVERVIEW

WMU[®]
God's mission.
Our passion.
wmustore.com

International Mission Study

The annual International Mission Study provides resources for every age level in your church to learn about, pray for, and support international missions. Learn more about the current study at wmu.com/ims.

Project HELP: Mental Health

As Christians, we are called to encourage those around us with the love of Christ, walk alongside them through difficult seasons, and help them know the Lord is near. Visit wmu.com/mentalhealth to learn more.

Christian Women's Job Corps/Christian Men's Job Corps (CWJC/CMJC)

CWJC/CMJC—one of WMU's compassion ministries—exists to equip women and men in a Christian context for life and employment. Through more than 100 registered and certified CWJC/CMJC sites across the nation, each year thousands of women and men gain hope for their future. Visit wmu.com/jobcorps to learn how you can become involved.

WorldCrafts

WorldCrafts is the fair-trade division of national WMU. Its vision is to offer an income with dignity and the hope of everlasting life to every person on earth. To accomplish this vision, WorldCrafts develops sustainable fair-trade businesses among impoverished people around the world. Visit WorldCrafts.org for more information.

Pure Water, Pure Love (PWPL)

PWPL has a three-fold mission:

- supply missionaries with water filters
- provide the people they serve with wells that offer clean water
- supply missions teams with water filters for use on short-term missions trips

Visit wmu.com/pwpl to learn how you can help.

Resources for Missions Groups

Resources for preschool, children, students, and adults are all available at wmustore.com.

New Customers: Save 20% Today!

Ready to get started and be on mission? **Enjoy 20% savings** on your **new missions resources order** by calling WMU Customer Service at 1-800-968-7301, Monday–Thursday, 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. CT. Be sure to mention promo code **START20**. (Some restrictions apply. Discount not available at wmustore.com.)



Welcome *from the President*



Hello friends! Do you remember that song from your childhood?

“The B-I-B-L-E. Yes, that’s the book for me. I stand alone on the Word of God: the B-I-B-L-E.” My Girls in Action leader many years ago shared that my Bible was my “basic instructions before leaving earth.” I have remembered that all these years later. When reading the Bible, I spend time with God—time to hear His guidance, time to feel His love for me, and time to learn what I am to do next. Having a guide makes life so much simpler.

Throughout life, we have different guides and instructions that are also beneficial. Without instructions, life can become complicated. For instance, think about bringing home a newborn baby, who does not have an instruction booklet, or assembling a bicycle late on Christmas Eve without instructions. Not possessing or not following instructions can complicate our lives.

Missions Leader is your WMU comprehensive guide to help you plan for the entire year. It will show you areas of missions focus, the overarching themes, and special projects for 2023–24. This guide provides practical ideas you can use and modify to fit the needs of your church, helping everyone in your church grow in his or her understanding of and passion for missions.

The WMU emphasis is Hope in Christ. WMU’s mandate, making disciples of Jesus who live on mission, will be the backdrop to help us reach the four objectives of our emphasis.

- Because of our hope in Christ, we will seek to be genuine in love. First Corinthians 13:4, 7–8 says, “Love is patient, love is kind. . . . It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.” People need that kind of love.
- Because of our hope in Christ, we will seek to be patient in tribulation. There will be complications and challenges, but we need to learn to be patient.
- Because of our hope in Christ, we will seek to be constant in prayer. Prayer changes you, and it changes the world. God is calling us as His people to invest our lives in something bigger than ourselves . . . the kingdom of God.
- Because of our hope in Christ, we will seek to be compassionate to all. Through WMU Compassion Ministries, you can directly help suffering people throughout the world.

WMU’s watchword for 2023–24 is found in Romans 12:12, which says, “Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.” This verse reminds us that, because we have hope in Christ, we can help make disciples of Jesus who live on mission.

Connie Dixon is president of national WMU.

DEVOTION

Grow in Christlike Love

Start by Clinging to the Vine

By Lauren Crews

Dinner was finished—a Passover unlike anything previously experienced. The disciples dipped their fingers in “salt water” to remember the plagues and their bondage. They drank four times to remember their redemption. But then Jesus washed their feet and declared someone would betray Him. He was leaving but sending a Helper. Veiled in an ancient vineyard metaphor was a hint that they could fail. But His love was so great that He left them with a final challenge so their joy would be full. He would provide the last connection that bound them to heaven.



Abiding in His Love

John 15 describes our relationship with God like a branch on a vine. The Old Testament repeatedly refers to Israel as His vineyard, and each time God brought punishment because of Israel’s disobedience. When Jesus identified as the True Vine, the narrative changed. By abiding in the Vine, the disciples had the opportunity for abundance and growth, and so do we. I’ve heard it described like this. I can’t jump into the sky and fly, but if I’m inside a plane, I can because the plane can. In Christ, we can because He can. He provides us with everything we need and desires us to base our responses on our love for Him. When we struggle with this, we can depend on the Vine to help us produce the fruit that glorifies God.



Acceptance of His Love

One would think abundant rain is beneficial for a vineyard. However, the sweetest grapes are produced in an arid environment. Too much rain results in plump grapes, but their flavor is diluted. A good vinedresser knows to cut away the bad fruit and anything that entwines the branches or prevents growth. John 15:9–13 tells us we must keep God’s commandments to experience the joy of His love. This may seem legalistic, but learning obedience is part of the pruning process, and pruning is an expression of His love. Isaiah 5:6 describes what happens when God stops pruning the vineyard. It wastes away as briars and thorns come up. As we abide in His love, we will accept the pruning process.

Attachment to His Love

In addition to pruning, a healthy branch must remain attached to the vine and the vine attached to the trellis. In the Hebrew language, the hook or nail that attaches the vine is called a *vav*. *Vav* also serves as the conjunction “and.” It is a connector. Jesus said He is the connection between success and failure. Jesus provided a way for the disciples to overcome their history of disobedience by saying, “You can’t, but I can. Let Me be the vine. Attach to Me. My commands are your tether and will keep you from wandering.”

Jesus concluded with a final command: “Love each other as I have loved you” (John 15:12). This is done by loving others with the Christlike love He modeled. He encouraged them to abide in His love and accept the pruning of His commandments. The True Vine allowed Himself to be nailed to the Cross with our sin attached so our joy may be full. No greater love exists.



Lauren Crews is the author of *Strength of a Woman: Why You Are Proverbs 31*, an award-winning book that dives deep into the layers of Hebrew meaning, wordplay, and figurative language of the legendary passage.

Leadership Team Meeting Plans

By Chris Conrades

As you plan for the fall, there are vital things to remember. First: your hope is in Christ. This should fuel everything you do. Second: the lost around you need to find their hope in Christ. This is the greatest gift you can share. How will God use your WMU ministries this year to bring Him glory and make His hope famous?

Devotion: Grow in Christlike Love

Using the devotion on page 35 and the verses in John 15:9–13, share thoughts about growing in Christlike love. Pray together God would allow you to grow in your love for one another and for the world around you. Use the missionary prayer calendar from *Missions Mosaic* or at wmu.com/prayercalendar to lead in a time of prayer for missionaries.

FALL

Churchwide Kickoff

Fall signifies the end of summer and the beginning of a new year for many churches. Create a list of missions dreams for the upcoming year. Plan an event to highlight potential missions opportunities and church projects. Enlist teenagers and adults to help with this event, and build excitement for how your church will serve. More suggestions can be found on page 38.

State Missions Emphasis

Contact your state convention office, and obtain the details of your state's missions offering. Each state will provide resources for you to use. Discuss how to bring attention to this offering in your church. Pray many would participate and understand the value of this special emphasis. Find suggestions on page 40.

Children's Missions Day

Children's Missions Day is a great opportunity for the children of your church to participate in a missions project. Coordinate with your children's ministry leaders to plan an activity. Celebrate the participants after the event with a special thank-you card from your team. Remind the children how important they are in God's mission. Learn more on page 41 and at wmu.com/cmd.

Cooperative Program Sunday

The Cooperative Program (CP) is an important uniting force in the Southern Baptist Convention. Search sbc.net/cp to find resources and videos to share with your church, and discuss how your church can celebrate CP Sunday in October. Find suggestions and ideas on page 42.

Day of Prayer for Associational Missions

Encourage your church to spend time praying for churches in your association. Download resources from amerresources.org, and decide how to use them with your church. Learn more on page 43.

Baptist Women's World Day of Prayer

Every year in November, women around the world are encouraged to gather together and pray. Explain why this day is held, and discuss opportunities for women to gather. Consider inviting other churches to participate. Find more information on page 44.

Orphans and Widows Sunday

Use this opportunity to raise awareness about orphans and widows. One special ministry to emphasize is Mission:Dignity, a ministry of Guidestone Financial Resources that provides for widows of Southern Baptist pastors. For suggested resources, see page 45.

Suggested Agenda

- Lead in prayer and devotion time.
- Listen to reports from leadership team members and church staff.
- Finalize plans for quarterly emphases:
 - Churchwide Kickoff
 - State Missions Emphasis
 - Children's Missions Day
 - Cooperative Program Sunday
 - Day of Prayer for Associational Missions
 - Baptist Women's World Day of Prayer
 - Orphans and Widows Sunday
- Set date for the next leadership team meeting.

Missions Growth Idea

When you are a leader, it is often easy to focus all your energy on planning ideas for others. Challenge your team to find a personal missions activity to become involved in, whether it is forming a new friendship with a neighbor or volunteering in the community. Help your leaders find ways to share the gospel throughout the year.

Chris Conrades is a pastor's wife and mom of four, and she currently serves as the Indiana WMU president. She has been involved in WMU since she was in preschool and has a passion to help equip leaders with the tools they need to share the gospel in everyday life.

SHARING HOPE

God Loves the Lonely

The hope that awaits lonely hearts

By Anna Daub

People are lonely. Loneliness stems from an unmet desire to be seen and known. Some people are lonely because of the absence of people, while others are around people constantly but struggle to find meaningful relationships.

In 2018, a Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation report found 22 percent of American adults say they often or always feel lonely or socially isolated.¹ The COVID-19 pandemic compounded loneliness by isolating people from meaningful relationships. Social media complicates the situation, offering virtual connections that often fall short of their nonvirtual counterparts.

Gospel Hope for Lonely Hearts

The Bible offers hope to lonely people. In Genesis 16:13, Hagar calls God *El Roi*—“the God who sees.” She gives us a word of hope: God sees us. God also gives us a place to belong. He sent His Son, Jesus, to restore our relationship with Him. If we repent and believe in Jesus, God calls us friends, children, and heirs. Jesus is with us to the end of time (Matt. 28:20). We also become part of something bigger; our new birth positions us within a family—the church—that stretches through time and across nations.

The Already-Not-Yet Promises for Lonely People

George Eldon Ladd champions the “already” and “not yet” kingdom of God.² Christ came and inaugurated His kingdom, but this kingdom won’t be fully realized until He returns. Loneliness falls into this already-not-yet category. Christ came so we could know God. But while we wait for His return, we still wrestle with sin and brokenness. Being a Christian does not shelter us from loneliness; it reorients us to a coming day when loneliness will be no more.

Offering Hope to Lonely People

We can proclaim this message of hope to lonely people. We also promote it by offering real relationships to those who are lonely.³ Gather together with people for dinner, invite them to an event, or send them a message to let them know you care. Introduce them to others at your church.

The world is broken, desires go unmet, and relationships feel unobtainable. Something is missing. We proclaim a God who sees people, loves them, and makes a way for them to know Him. Through Christ, they can find a place of belonging while waiting for the day when they see their Savior face-to-face. And they will never be alone again.

FALL

Anna Daub is the director of special projects and partnerships for global theological initiatives at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. She is a former member of Girls in Action and Acteens.

¹See Figure 1 in Bianca DiJulio, Liz Hamel, Cailey Muñana, and Mollyann Brodie, “Loneliness and Social Isolation in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Japan: An International Survey,” Kaiser Family Foundation, p. 3, <https://files.kff.org/attachment/Report-Loneliness-and-Social-Isolation-in-the-United-States-the-United-Kingdom-and-Japan-An-International-Survey>.

²George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, edited by Donald A. Hagner, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1993), p. 368.

³John Dickson introduces these two categories in John Dickson, *The Best Kept Secret of Christian Mission: Promoting the Gospel with More Than Our Lips* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013), p. 23.



KICKOFF EVENT

Hope in Christ

A day to seek and share love, patience, prayer, and compassion

By Diana C. Derringer

When we turn to God in repentance and faith, He forgives us, transforms us, and fills us with hope. God then commands us to offer those gifts to the world around us.

This churchwide kickoff event, based on Romans 12:12, encourages and enables church members of all ages to reach out to their communities and world in four ways:

1. Show God's love to those undergoing stressful circumstances.
2. Extend patience and forgiveness to people whose choices hurt others as well as themselves.
3. Pray for missionaries and other believers working in hostile or restricted areas, and pray for their persecutors.
4. Express community compassion through free labor and service.

Before the Event

- Include representatives from all missions organizations in planning and implementing the event.
- Pray participants would experience Spirit-filled moments. Organize a prayer team to pray during the event.
- Choose a date and place (a Christian life center, gym, or parking lot with canopies for activities, if weather permits).
- Bring in technology team members to broadcast background music, or set up microphones for enlisted live musicians.
- Incorporate children and youth in all appropriate activities.
- Prepare a water and refreshment area.
- Place several trash cans around the event area.
- Enlist four people to organize, oversee, and engage others in the outreach of four stations.

Station 1:

Collect or create and distribute goody bags for cancer center patients, families with children in hospitals, or those with other life-threatening conditions.

1. Consider the following possible gifts:
 - › lap throws
 - › snacks approved by medical staff
 - › books or magazines
 - › cards of encouragement
 - › note cards, stamps, and pens
 - › games and activity books
 - › toys for children
 - › witnessing tracts and/or Bibles
 - › church contact and service information

2. Enlist children's missions groups to prepare artwork and notes of encouragement for the goody bags.
3. Place decorated collection boxes (see sidebar on page 39) for supplies in high-traffic areas of the church.

Station 2:

Provide a program for residents of a local jail or rehabilitation center.

1. Include the following:
 - › music—special or sing-along
 - › Bible study in simple language
 - › testimonies
 - › prayer
2. Assign roles for the program.
3. Acquire facility permission for the visit and a list of rules.

Station 3:

Plan focused prayer for missionaries and those they serve in high-risk areas.

1. Access a world map that highlights hostile or restricted areas for Christian activities (available at persecution.com).
2. Invite people who have experienced persecution to share their testimonies.
3. Enlist children's missions groups to cut out paper crosses. Write the names or initials and service areas of missionaries in high-risk areas on the crosses.
4. Obtain contact information for the missionaries, if possible.

Station 4:

Offer free manual labor and service.

1. Include greeters prepared to engage in conversations leading to gospel presentations. Ensure Bibles and gospel tracts are available.
2. Enlist volunteers to oversee each service activity. Suggested services include the following:
 - › car wash
 - › a free yard "sale"
 - › grocery pickup and delivery
 - › yard work
 - › minor house repairs
 - › Mom's Day Out babysitting that includes activities similar to Vacation Bible School for the children
3. Invite children or youth to create large decorated signs to identify each service activity area.

1. Gather needed supplies and assign responsibilities for each of the services.

Get the Word Out

- Read and explain the year's theme and watchword during missions meetings and church services the month before the event.
- Recruit workers through worship service announcements and texts, emails, or mailed invitations.
- Add the event to the church calendar, bulletins, preservice announcements, and website. List items needed for the collection boxes. Include sign-up information for grocery pickup and delivery, yard work, and house repairs.
- Post publicity flyers around the church and community.
- Publicize through local media.

During the Event

- Set up tables and chairs near the church entrance with snacks, pens, witnessing tracts, information about the church and missions organizations, a sign-in form with contact information for guests, and a separate sign-in form for workers.
- Set up tables and chairs for each on-site activity area.
- Enlist greeters to distribute supplies and answer questions.
- Broadcast background or live music throughout the event.

Station 1:

1. Prepare an assembly line for participants to place items in the goody bags.
2. Place the bags in boxes for delivery.
3. Pray over the boxes and the recipients prior to delivery.

Station 2:

1. Explain the facility's rules to volunteers.
2. Carpool to the facility.
3. Check in with staff, and review their expectations and your plans.
4. Invite both residents and staff to participate.
5. Introduce everyone by first names.
6. Pray for guidance and open hearts.
7. Offer special music, and invite everyone to sing along.
8. Present the Bible study.
9. Share testimonies.
10. Receive prayer requests.
11. Pray.
12. Distribute Bibles and gospel tracts, if permitted.
13. Thank everyone for attending.

Supply Drives for Age-Level Missions Organizations and Kickoff Event

- » Invite all church members to collect needed supplies for age-level missions organizations, such as pencils, pens, scissors, glue, and construction paper, on the fifth Sunday before the kickoff event. Explain the need for extras for the Mom's Day Out activities.
- » Schedule a monthlong drive to collect items for the Station 1 kickoff event.
- » Enlist children's organizations to decorate collection boxes with cutouts of needed items and to prepare posters with lists of needs for both drives.
- » Consider friendly competition for the collections: groups, classes, boys versus girls, opposite sides of the worship center, etc.

Station 3:

1. Display a world map, and draw attention to hostile and restricted areas.
2. Discuss the reality of persecution around the world.
3. Call on participants for examples of persecution.
4. Introduce the guest speakers, and invite them to discuss their experiences with persecution.
5. Distribute the crosses with the missionaries' information.
6. Divide participants into groups to pray for missionaries and the people they serve, both the persecuted and the persecutors.
7. Send notes of encouragement to missionaries.
8. Thank the guests for sharing.

Station 4:

1. Separate the service areas so traffic flows easily.
2. Post large signs to identify each service activity.
3. Greet visitors, and spend time in conversation, including a gospel message. Offer Bibles and gospel tracts.

Wrap Up

- Thank volunteers, and encourage their continued participation in similar activities throughout the year. Invite everyone to the next missions meeting.
- Join hands to form a circle. Share sentence prayers of thanksgiving and commitment.
- Report on the event during a church service and through texts, emails, and bulletins. Thank all for their participation and donations. Include invitations to the next missions meeting.
- Evaluate and discuss future events with organizers.

Diana C. Derringer, a former social worker and adjunct professor, writes for several publications and is the author of *Beyond Bethlehem and Calvary: 12 Dramas for Christmas, Easter and More!* Connect with her at dianaderringer.com.

Whatever It Takes

By Laurie Register

True confession—I have a thing about calendars. Not only have I been known to purchase a calendar in May (for the following year), but I also usually end up with multiple planner-type calendars each year. I am a visual learner, and seeing my day, week, and month planned out helps ensure I accomplish all I need to do. Rewriting some of these plans as I transfer information to a new planner does not hurt either!

FALL

Friends and coworkers do not operate in the same way. They follow other methods for staying on track. Whatever works for you, take time now to do whatever you need to do to stay on track for promoting state missions in your church.

Many states observe the week of prayer for state missions and the state missions offering in September. Churches can hear about what God is doing in their state and how they can participate through their prayers, their financial gifts, and even by working alongside those ministering in their state.

Two Months Prior

- Contact your state WMU office. Discover what resources are available, and order or download the materials you will need.
- Review the materials as they become available.
- Work with your church staff to schedule various components of the emphasis (promotion, churchwide mission study, related churchwide project, state mission speaker, etc.).
- Enlist leadership for age-level studies and any other events related to the emphasis.
- Connect with one of the state missionaries or ministries highlighted to determine how your church could offer support in a hands-on way. Work with your church staff to plan and promote that churchwide event or missions project.

One Month Prior

- Distribute resources to leadership as the materials become available.
- Utilize multiple avenues of promotion for the emphasis and associated events.
- Continue planning the churchwide event.



Month of Emphasis

- Continue to promote involvement in the state missions emphasis.
- Provide prayer guides and envelopes to all church members.
- Conduct a churchwide study. You may want to include a meal featuring foods representative of your state. Decorate your study area with items related to your state. Make your state—and the people in your state who need to know and follow Jesus—a focal point of what you do during this month.
- Enlist someone to host prayertime each day for one of the areas highlighted in your state's missions materials.
- Invite a speaker to share about his or her work with missions in your state. With the increased use of Zoom and similar programs, this could be in person or online.
- If your state provides promotion videos, share them during your worship services each week. Afterward, provide the video or a link to the video on your church's website or in your church newsletter.
- Conduct the churchwide event, using the opportunity to remind participants they are a part of what God is doing in their state through their prayers, their giving, and events like this one.

Laurie Register is the executive director of South Carolina WMU. One of her responsibilities is preparing materials for her state's missions emphasis.

Children's Missions Day | September 16



Operation Education

By Heather Keller

September means back to school for many, so it's the perfect time for a Children's Missions Day (CMD) theme that allows children and families to show God's love to local schools. "Operation Education" will allow your children to reach out to teachers, staff, students, and their families.

CMD 2023 gives children an exciting opportunity to impact the schools they attend by delivering care packages, notes, and baked treats; improving classrooms and public spaces; or visiting with those who keep the school system running and inviting them to worship services. As always, children can participate in a variety of projects, but remember the main idea of CMD is to give children an opportunity to experience telling someone about God's love, even if that person hasn't come to salvation just yet. It can be as simple as saying, "God loves me, and He loves you too," while serving treats, delivering a care package, or cleaning and improving a public space. God will use all those moments to teach others, and children participating in CMD, about His love for all people.

Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity. —1 Timothy 4:12

However you choose for your children to participate in CMD this year, make sure they have an opportunity to leave the walls of your church and interact directly with someone as they share God's love. For more CMD information and resources or to report your event, visit wmu.com/cmd.

The Maintenance Shop/Bus Shop

Plan an after-school snack delivery to the staff members who make getting to school a breeze. During your CMD event, decorate small lunch sacks, and pack them with prepackaged snacks. Pray over the bags. Meet up after school one day to deliver these snacks, and make certain each child gets to deliver a bag to a staff member.

Sticker Me Crazy

Children can deliver stickers to classmates as a way to show God's love. All you need is to know how many children are in each classroom in your local elementary school. During CMD, decorate snack-sized ziplock bags, and fill them with stickers. Each child at your event can be assigned a classroom at his or her local elementary school and can deliver the bags to that class. Work with school office staff to learn what time of day would be best and how to appropriately deliver these bags.

Prayerwalk

Teach children (and their families) about prayerwalking by guiding them through a prayerwalk on the school campuses where children, preteens, and teens who worship with your congregation attend. Invite families to participate in praying for specific needs of each school, calling aloud the names of staff members as well as groups within the school.

Heather Keller is the WMU Girls in Action and Children in Action consultant.

FALL



Cooperative Program Sunday | October 1

Serve Better Together

By Diana C. Derringer



FALL

According to the Cooperative Program (CP) home page on the Southern Baptist Convention website, the CP is “the financial fuel for reaching every person for Jesus Christ in every town, every city, every state, and every nation.” It “enables churches to prioritize purpose, elevate mission, [and] accelerate impact.”

When Southern Baptists give their tithes and offerings and churches earmark a percentage of undesignated money to the Cooperative Program, they join other churches in spreading the gospel in ways that are impossible on their own. CP Sunday on October 1 provides an opportunity to learn about, pray for, and support the Cooperative Program.

Two Months Prior

- Schedule the CP emphasis, and add it to the church calendar.
- Contact the state convention for state-specific CP materials.
- Order the CP Digital Kit from sbc.net/missions/the-cooperative-program.
- Enlist two to four church members to share testimonies about giving—why they give and different ministries their money supports—the weeks before Cooperative Program Sunday.
- Recruit three or more volunteers for a skit on ministry without the CP.
- Invite missionaries, church planters, education personnel, children’s homes staff, disaster-relief workers, or other ministry representatives to share how the CP frees them to focus on their work.
- Discuss with the pastor a possible sermon or sermon series and Sunday School curriculum on giving. See the Stewardship Resources link under “Promotional Resources” on the CP web page.
- Enlist a prayer team.
- Prepare church exit signs that say, “Change the world through the gifts you give.”
- Schedule a CP picnic or potluck, and prepare quizzes for children from state and national CP resources.

One Month Prior

- Outline the CP emphasis itinerary.
- Choose videos for the weeks before Cooperative Program Sunday.
- Post the CP Heart Chart from the CP web page in several locations around the church.

Month of Emphasis

- Print copies of the CP Handout brochure found under “Promotional Resources” on the CP web page. Insert in the CP Sunday bulletin.
- Present the following skit on the impact of ministry without the CP.
 - › Narrator: Imagine international missions, disaster relief, and other ministries without the Cooperative Program.
 - › Spotlight a missionary at a desk. The missionary says, “Another mass mailing and a trip back to the United States to beg for money. We never have enough time for our missions work. Yet we must neglect it to find the funds we need. There has to be a better way.”
 - › Spotlight a worker holding a child. The worker says, “I wonder how many churches I have to visit to raise funds to get our children’s home through another month. There must be a better way.”
 - › Add other examples if time allows.
 - › Narrator: “There is a better way.”
 - › Create similar skits for age-level or family emphases.
- Introduce guest ministry representatives, followed by the pastor, to share the CP’s better way.
- Pray for the Cooperative Program and the lives it impacts every day.
- Station ushers under signs at each exit after the service to receive CP donations.
- Follow with a CP picnic or potluck and the quizzes for children.

Diana C. Derringer has seen the Cooperative Program at work through her education at a Baptist college, partnership mission trips, stories of missionary friends, and countless resources available to and through her local church and missions organizations.

Strengthen Your Association's Work through Prayer

By Jeanette Cloyd

In 1982, as a recent college graduate, I spent several weeks of my summer serving as a missionary to an association in the Ozark Mountains of Missouri. I quickly learned the value of Baptist associations—a group of local churches working together to advance the gospel and provide encouragement and support to one another. I later married a pastor, and after 33 years in the pastorate, he became an associational mission strategist, further opening my eyes to the work of the association.

I am thankful Southern Baptists have set aside the Day of Prayer for Associational Missions, a day to learn about your local association and focus on praying for its work.

Two Months Prior

This year, the Day of Prayer for Associational Missions is October 22. Begin making plans by learning about your association. Your associational mission strategist can provide a wealth of information specific to your association. Visit ameresources.org to obtain additional information and resources.

The day is not a one-size-fits-all day. Prayerfully consider how your church will observe the day. Choose a format that will produce the biggest impact with your congregation. Obtain your pastor's input in these decisions.

- While opportunities for observing the day are limitless, consider these ideas:
 - Host a prayer rally developed around specific prayer needs of the association.
 - Prayerwalk or drive to the ministry sites or the churches of the association.
 - Arrange a pastor swap with another church in the association to learn about the other church's work and how to pray for this partner congregation.
 - Invite the associational mission strategist to speak about the work of the association and how your church can pray specifically for its benefit.

- Strategize how to include all age groups, including families with young children, in the event.
- Emphasize the benefit of praying for the association, and consider how best to include a prayer element in your plans.

One Month Prior

Create interest in the planned event during the month leading up to the Day of Prayer for Associational Missions.

- Recruit children (Royal Ambassadors, Girls in Action, etc.) to create posters promoting the church's plans for the Day of Prayer for Associational Missions. Place these posters in strategic locations around the church.
- Use all of your church's communication methods to promote the emphasis—social media, bulletins, newsletters, website, group texts, phone calls, etc.

Month of Emphasis

Plans are made, promotion has been done, and now it's time for action.

- Observe the Day of Prayer for Associational Missions as planned.
- During the event, recruit the youth to wash windshields of attendees' cars in the parking lot. Conclude the event by saying, "Your windshields have been washed today by the youth of our church. As you leave, you'll be better able to see the missions field of (name of your association). Pray for its work as you travel home."

Jeanette Cloyd is a part-time administrative assistant to her local Baptist association in Illinois, where her husband serves as the associational mission strategist.



FALL

Baptist Women's World Day of Prayer | November 6

Encourage Baptist Women around the World

By Tracey Gholson

“I’m praying for you.” These four simple words bring much encouragement when we hear them spoken or receive them in a text, card, or email. Your church can encourage Baptist women around the world by observing the Baptist Women’s World Day of Prayer. By participating in the day of prayer, your church will develop understanding and compassion as you pray for Baptist women around the world.

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What Is It?

A special day of prayer among Baptist women began in 1948, following World War II. According to the Baptist World Alliance Women (BWA) history, Baptist women in Europe promoted the first day of prayer as “a means to reunite Baptists separated by the pain and devastation of war, and to strengthen the spiritual bonds in years to come.” The observance of this day quickly spread to other continents.

Today, the Baptist Women’s World Day of Prayer is typically held the first Monday of November; however, it can be observed anytime that month. This year’s observance is November 6, 2023, during which time thousands of Baptist women gather to pray for one another on this special day, which is central to the work of BWA.

Two Months Prior

- Gather a team of women to plan your emphasis.
- Decide how your church will observe the day of prayer. You could host a traditional event at church or an informal event in a home or coffee shop. You could assemble a prayer breakfast, prayer picnic, prayer retreat, or prayerwalk. You might even host or attend an online day of prayer service.
- Select the date and time of your event.
- Plan the event program. The focus should be on praying and giving, but the program could also include songs, Scripture, a Bible study, or videos. A planning guide, creative ideas, and other resources mentioned here are available at bwawomen.org/day-of-prayer.



- Print copies of the BWA program—one per participant. It includes prayer requests from the seven continental unions.
- Pray for your event and for the offering you will collect.

One Month Prior

- Meet with your planning team to finalize plans.
- Print BWA promotional posters, and post them in your church.
- Promote your event in church newsletters, bulletins, and on social media.
- Make announcements in church services.
- Send emails and text messages to women to invite them to attend.
- Show a video to your women’s group about a ministry project supported by the day of prayer offering. Videos are available on the BWA website.
- Continue to pray for the event.

Month of Emphasis

- Check bwawomen.org/day-of-prayer for current prayer requests from the seven continental unions.
- Distribute programs to women who cannot attend so they can pray at home.
- Provide opportunities for younger and older women to pray together.
- Send in the offering collected during the event.
- Continue to pray for your Baptist sisters around the world.

Tracey Gholson is a pastor’s wife and Women on Mission leader from Nashville, Tennessee. Her church enjoyed hosting its associational WMU Baptist Women’s World Day of Prayer event.

Orphans and Widows Sunday | November 12

The Fatherless and Husbandless Are Substantial to God

By Karen Pace

The heart of God is one of generosity. Believers can live this out every day through their obedience, time, and money. Sunday, November 12, marks this year's Orphans and Widows Sunday and creates awareness among Southern Baptists to the needs of orphans and widows near us.

As individuals and churches, are we following Jesus' commands to care for the orphans and widows? In John 14, Jesus promised He would not leave the disciples (or us) as orphans but would provide His Spirit to be with them forever. In that same chapter, Jesus also said one way we demonstrate our love for Him is to obey His commands. Loving and caring for orphans and widows is just one way we can live out our love for Him. What can that look like this year for you and your church?

Two Months Prior

- Research needs in your community or state:
 - Baptist Children's Homes
 - Reputable foster care agencies or organizations
 - Families within your church (orphans or widows)
- Compose a simple list of ideas and needs, such as preparing meals, providing for a family night out, planning a birthday party, doing yard work or housework, collecting needed items, paying for outings or personal needs, and offering rides or carpooling.
- Create a prayer experience to support the needs of orphans and widows. Include ways to encourage participants to act.
- Consider hosting a benefit to engage others in helping widows and orphans. For more information, visit guidestone.org/mission-dignity/get-involved, WorldCrafts.org/share, and WorldCrafts.org/lifeline.
- Determine points of contact, order needed supplies, decide on dates of activities, and encourage all appropriate age levels to participate.

One Month Prior

- Advertise emphasis activities on your church's social media pages. Secure permission before posting personal or proprietary information.
- Send emails, flyers, or even handwritten notes inviting members and other individuals to be involved.
- Share newsletters, media slides during worship, flyers in Sunday School classes or other small groups, and announcements prior to or at the end of worship.
- Film short video interviews with widows or orphans as appropriate to create awareness and invite others to participate (not longer than 90 seconds). Use this via social media or in worship.
- Video or print prayer requests to use in worship on Orphans and Widows Sunday or throughout the emphasis month.
- Consistently contact individuals, agencies, or families who are recipients of any activities you plan.

Month of Emphasis

- Celebrate and report activities and outcomes to your group and church family.
- Follow up with contacts made, and consider ways to stay involved with those in need. This may lead to a new mission or ministry strategy for your church or group.
- Encourage participants to continue to be involved individually in ministering to orphans and widows.
- Ask participants to consider foster care and adoption as an ongoing part of their giving.

Bringing awareness to needs can be life changing for both the recipient and the giver and can turn into lifelong adventures as we follow Jesus!

Karen Pace is on staff at Georgia WMU and has experienced life as the "mom" to three who were in need.



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